

SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA MASTER PLAN

***Open House Summary Notes
Thursday, October 16, 2003***

Attendees/Affiliation

Usama Abujbarah, Town of Cave Creek
Jean Anderson, ASHA
Bill Arsenault
Ann Baker
Mary Beadle
Peggy Brock, Horse Community
Bob Broomfield
Lu Cartharius, Town of Cave Creek
John Caughlin
Patricia Chen, JSI
Thom Clark, DVM
Gail Clement
Wade Cox, Local Resident
Jim Crook, ASHA
Anna Daniel
Judy Darbyshire, AAS, FOS, SHPO/Site Stewards
Joan Frawley
Michael Frawley
Dick Frye
Emily Garber, Tonto National Forest
Norman Gary, Resident
Todd Gilson, Resident
Rita Gosnell
Connie Grant, Carefree Adventures
Corine Grant, Carefree Adventure Jeep Tours
John Gunn, Maricopa County
Mark Hackbarth
Roland Hayes
Jolene Huffman
Pat Jones
Anna Ingram
Jennifer Johnston, Maricopa County Parks & Rec Dept.
Louis Lantz, Sierra Club
Bill Lazenby

Howard Learned
Dick Lorange, Coalition of Arizona Bicyclists
Gilbert Lupe, Cave Creek Council
Lou Mancuccini
A. Martin
Thomas McGuire, Docent and Cave Creek Resident
Angie McIntyre
Grace Meeth, Town of Cave Creek
Brian Miller, Town of Cave Creek
Sue Miller, Arizona Site Steward/Local Resident
Heidi Mlodzik, Sierra Club
Mike Mlodzik, Sierra Club
Doug Moody
Bonnie Mooreman
Ken Mouw, Maricopa County Parks & Recreation
Patricia Mozilo, AAS, Site Steward, Cave Creek Saddle Club
Sue Mueller
Brent Mullen
Bambi Muller, Town of Cave Creek
Herb Natker
Eric Nickerson
Joe Noll
Barbra O'Brien
Sally Odette, APS
Tom O'Reilly, Cave Creek Saddle Club
Jean Paisley
Arlene Patton
Jean Pearson, Resident
Brenda Poulos
Art Randall, Wild West Jeep Tours
Johnny Ringo, Carefree Adventures

George Ross, Red Dog Homeowners
Association
Nan Ross, Citizen of CC - Hiker
Karin Seemzer, Desert Advocate
Kathy Sheets, USFS - Cave Creek
Ranger District
Kathy Smith
Susan Smith
Terry Smith, Cave Creek Westside Trail
Coordinator

Don Sorchych, Sonoran News
Don Turner
John Vannucci
Sara Vannucci
Vern Willer
Jay Williams
Al Zeman
Frank Ziskovsky, Cave Creek Saddle
Club

Consultant Team

Mike Park, URS
Peggy Fiandaca, PSA

Richard Knox, URS

I. Introduction

Mike Park welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation. The purpose of the public open house was to present the preferred alternative (including the draft trails plan) for the long-term management of SCRCA. Mike presented information on the following:

- Selected preferred alternative for the 2,154-acre site
- Draft preliminary trails system plan
- Phase I trails plan
- Proposed site plans for the main site entry area
- Facility architectural concepts for the educational center

Mike mentioned that the project started in February 2002 with data gathering, biological, water and other studies. First newsletter was published in June 2002 and the first stakeholder and public meetings were held. At those meetings, displays documenting the data gathering and SCRCA vision were presented. Public comments were taken.

Second SCRCA newsletter and another round of stakeholder and public meetings were held in January 2003. The application of the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process was presented as well as three alternatives. A third newsletter was published in June 2003.

Since June 2003, trail routes have been studied, a preferred alternative was revised to reflect the regional trail, the Educational Center architecture concept and facility site plan has been studied, site interpretive graphics have been completed, and the master plan report outline has been developed. A fourth newsletter was recently published that outlined the project to date and announced this public open house.

Following the presentation the public was encouraged to ask questions or make comments. Following is a summary of the comments made during the meeting. Mayor Vincent Francia moderated the discussion.

II. Public Comments

The following were identified as issues identified by the Forest Service in a written letter that was read at the public meeting and is attached.

- Trail, fire, and resource management is an issue.
- Dumping people at the national forest.
- “Trespass Trails” are a concern.
- The SCRCA plan encourages trespassing on national forests, and that is a concern.
- Fire on conservation area or the forest adjacent and there is no ability to respond because of the locked gate.
- Cooperation of agencies is critical.
- Closure of road is concern to the national forest.
- Closure of the road has diminished the ability to enjoy access to the national forest.
- Semi-primitive access to forest should be allowed.
- Pass through to national forest must be allowed.
- Felt that national forest was not involved in the planning process.

III. Questions/Responses

The following are the additional public comments made at the meeting.

Question: Very impressed with what was said. Is all the information presented available?

Response: Will be put on County website.

Question: Is there something in plan that will clearly define public access to trails?

Response: There will be no limits on trail access.

Question: Is the plan still based on the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) approach?

Response: Modified LAC.

Question: Will there be the ability to set and limit numbers of people accessing the trails?

Response: “No”, unless there are documented problems from regular routine maintenance.

Comment: As long as it is clearly stated.

Question: Is there a trail loop near the town property?

Response: We have it listed as a planning need.

Question: Water available?

Response: Yes.

Question: At all entrance/exit areas – will they have the water and a sign in/out sheet?

Response: It will be developed over time. The Joint Planning Committee (JPC) has discussed having an “Iron Ranger” at every entry over time. Water will be provided over time but not likely in the near future. It will be provided immediately at the main entry area.

Comment: Love the trailer parking spaces. Examine Scottsdale for the good and bad examples for equestrian facilities. The “ride” part of “bike, hike and ride” is forgotten a lot. Appreciate the mindset here. People will use it. It’s great to have multi-use trails, but when you mix bikes and horses you have a disaster.

Comment: Should designate specific “horse” trails as well as bikes/multi-use.

Question: Gravel set up for parking?

Response: Yes.

Comment: Letter read from owners of the mine site. We believe we should have access to our property according to ARS that reads “Reasonable access to private property by any political subdivision of this state.” Issue is “reasonable”. When Spur Cross Ranch was purchased, it did not have access. If Town had not purchased the mine, it would have been granted, but they did purchase it. Not requesting auto access to sensitive areas, but Spur Cross Road should be opened to the Tonto National Forest and the private property.

Comment: Appreciate everything the Town has done. My compliments on the site plan. Asphalt on site.

Comment: One thing that we can all agree on is what we want for Spur Cross.

Comment: Citizen Management of the park is very important to ensure that it is responsible to Town. A Citizen’s Management Board should be organized. It would have the ability to deal with the policies related to SCRCA. It is very important for the public to not lose control over the management.

Question: Uses along Spur Cross Road? Any plans to protect private land adjacent to the park? (Densities will jump up.)

Response:

Comment: Wonderful process. The idea of Spur Cross as an identifying element of the Town of Cave Creek is important.

- Signage – When you come to dirt road. Explain where public access begins and ends.
- Cost of Park Use – Example: \$5 for each vehicle at Cave Creek Park. Why should someone pay more for fewer services?
- Norm Foster's role – Sold property for less than he was offered. He should be recognized for what he has done for SCRCA.

IV. Comment Cards

Participants at the public open house were asked to complete a comment card if they wanted to speak at the meeting or to provide information to the process. Following is a summary of the responses

- Wild West Jeep Tours has been denied access to our leased land north of Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area. This continues to have a negative impact on our sole source of income. We have, for 20+ years, been good stewards of our land. Thank you.
- \$3 per person cost is not good for families.
- Signage needed to let people know where parking is (along dirt road).
- Please facilitate access issue of property access brought up by Norm Foster. He has been an esteemed contributor to this process.
- Access to trails is important.
- There has been concern expressed by people who object to having to pay a "toll" to pass through Spur Cross to access the Tonto National Forest. If the principal point of Spur Cross is on the west side of the road (behind the fence) and the Iron Ranger was moved from Gate 1 to Gate 2, the people could pass through and one area of aggravation could be removed.

V. Questionnaire Summary

A brief questionnaire was distributed at the public meeting and participants were asked to complete. Sixteen 16 questionnaires were received at the meeting and not all questions received a response. Participants were asked to rate various statements using the key below:

5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree
(The percentage of responses was rounded to the nearest tenth.)

Statement #1: Does the level of proposed trail development make sense, i.e., restricted access, primary trail, secondary trail, etc?

	5	4	3	2	1
<u>Percentage</u>	38.5%	46.2%	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%

Average Score 4.2

Responses 13

Comments on Statement #1:

- Which trail will be the first one improved and available for use to “all” citizens?
- Need Forest Road 48 open to 6L gate.
- We (my family), I, and neighbors want to eliminate “the limits of acceptable change” clause. It is too broad a definition. We want access to the Tonto National Forest via walking or equestrian use 100% of time on this historical road. LAC should not apply to our trails used to access the Tonto National Forest.
- The development of the trails yes – make more loop trails.

Statement #2: Do you believe the earth sheltered/earth material/low visual impact of the Education Center concept makes sense?

	5	4	3	2	1
<u>Percentage</u>	77.0%	15.3%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%

Average Score 4.7

Responses 13

Comments on Statement #2:

- Yes – but do not wall in Spur Cross. This is about open space – freedom from the confines of life.

Statement #3: Does the location of the proposed Education Center and parking facilities make sense? Are we being sensitive to the site?

	5	4	3	2	1
<u>Percentage</u>	57.3%	35.7%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Average Score 4.5

Responses 14

Comments on Statement #3:

- More work is needed to address accessibility to seniors and handicapped people. If not by motorized tours, how will they enjoy the park?
- Not everyone can do everything, and to expect a site to provide it all is ridiculous. It “could” be overly sensitive getting too urban and hygienic. Don’t allow the naturalness to be taken away.
- Side comment unrelated to above (Statement #3): Would like to see a bird watch platform on or near an approved trail.
- Interpretive trail for educational purposes for school children to learn daily on the values of nature and preservation of same.
- It is at the beginning of the experience of the adventure. Ok – except for the wall. This is a good plan.

Statement #4: Do you believe the planning process has recognized and/or included your ideas?

	5	4	3	2	1
<u>Percentage</u>	30.0%	40.0%	26.0%	10.7%	0.0%

Average Score 3.9

Responses 10

Comments on Statement #4:

- Job well done!
- No, it was aimed too heavily on horse peoples’ wishes and the usual Cave “Creeker” nimbies.
- I am still concerned with the wording/use of “limits of acceptable change”. A statement within the Spur Cross definitely saying that there will be “no quotas or restrictions on users”. Also, I would suggest a program such as “Adopt-A-Trail” be implemented to get users involved. The more eyes and ears one has on the trails, the better. The Saddle Club would be one of the first to volunteer. Kudos to you all for listening to us. We are here to help make this the best possible Spur Cross for all users. Appreciate your doing the trailer/truck areas for the horses. No pavement. Thanks!

- I'm still amazed at the people who were involved in Spur Cross purchase not being consulted early on!
- Disagree with no access to the Tonto National Forest and private property.
- Can't think of much to say, except that I was impatient at first, and didn't want things to get too complicated and bureaucratic, but I think that things are turning out just fine!
- We want NO limits or access to trails for equestrian and hiking use, including and not excluding to water. For drinking. We want NO quotas or daily permits to be placed on primary or secondary trails to access the Tonto National Forest via horseback or hiking through Spur Cross.
- Yes, however, the geology inventory does not include "Gunn's Window" (arch), "The Nutcracker" (rock feature – see map), along Cottonwood Wash and the fortress volcanic vent. I can help. (Tom McGuire)
- Recognized – yes – included? Things like unpaved parking-equine sensitive plans-loop trails. I have concerns regarding "limits of acceptable change" – will the public be able to participate in these decisions? In the past the county has not been receptive to this.

VI. Teaming Opportunities

Participants at the public open house and the previous public meeting were asked to sign up to participate in "teaming opportunities" for the implementation of SCRCA master plan. Following is the list of volunteers.

Trails Teaming

Jean Anderson	George Ross
Terry Smith	Frank Ziskovsky
Ken Mouw	Thomm Clark
Rita Gosnell	Frank Signard
June Clark	Jean Pearson
Pat Jones	Todd Gilson
Tom O'Reilly	Bill Lazenby

Hydrological Teaming

Gail Clement	Tom McQuire
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Interpretation/Education Teaming

Mark Hackbarth	Brenda Poulos
Tom McQuire	Jay Williams

Cultural Resources Teaming

Brenda Poulos	Mark Hackbarth
Grace Meeth	George Ross
John Caughlin	Jean Paisley
Sue Mueller	Judy Darbyshire

Fire Management Teaming

No participants to date

Community Outreach Teaming

Jean Paisley

Soils Testing Teaming

No participants to date

Biological Resources Teaming

Angie McIntire

Other Teaming

Arlene Patton

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.